

Buckinghamshire Archaeological Officers' Report

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 20th August 2014

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A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To advise the Forum of the work of the County Archaeological Service since the last BHEF meeting.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

- 2 **The Forum is particularly invited to NOTE:**

- a **resources**
- b **strategic issues and projects**
- c **recent planning-related archaeological work**
- d **progress in securing publication of archaeological reports.**

C. RESOURCES

- 3 The County's archaeological service forms part of the Planning, Advisory and Compliance Service's Environment Team within Place Services. Following the departure of Sheila Keene in June 2014, we are awaiting the appointment of a new Environment Lead Officer in September 2014. Philip Markham is now the Senior Archaeological Planning Officer, Eliza Alqassar the Archaeological Planning Officer (part-time), Julia Wise the HER Officer.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4 **Strategic Issues/Projects**

High Speed 2 – The County Council submitted a formal petition to Government in Summer 2014. BCC will be meeting with Government end of September to discuss the issues raised by BCC, including the archaeology service. Archaeology team to meet with HS2 representatives to discuss Written Schemes of Investigation for fieldwork along the Buckinghamshire section of the route. A HS2 Heritage sub-committee meeting will take place at the end of September 2014.

Strategic Planning – awaiting results of appeals for major developments around Aylesbury.

English Heritage consultation on the NHPP – all three officers and the BCC Heritage Champion attended English Heritage workshops and provided feedback on the NHPP and its proposed second version.

Historic Towns Project – the summary publication had a ‘soft launch’, in May with a press release which prompted a number of articles in local newspapers.

New National Designations

DCMS has recently listed the George Devey-designed engine house, gateway and watchman’s lodge and the cooling pond at Dancer’s End Pumping Station; Uplands Conference Centre at Hughenden; the former Hare and Hounds in Marlow and Longwick War Memorial, all at Grade II.

6 Planning related archaeological work

Volume measures	1st Quarter 2014	2nd Quarter 2014
Total number of consultations handled	123	144
Number of planning applications handled	91	106
Planning applications responded to within 14 days (target 90%) From April 2014 response within 21 days	87%	97%
Number of development-related archaeological fieldwork projects	11	13
Success rate at appeal (target 50% annual success rate)	0 of 0	0 of 0

A full list of development-related fieldwork (January to June 2014) is provided as Appendix A.

Significant archaeological investigations include:

Aston Clinton - Excavation of an Iron Age – Roman settlement at Aston Clinton has revealed a large section of a major routeway, likely to be the Lower Icknield Way. Excavations are ongoing by University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

Cuddington – a high-status Roman settlement has been excavated, including stone buildings suggestive of a bathhouse/villa/temple. Awaiting report.

Worth noting that we are seeing an increase in the number of applications for solar farms.

7 **Publication update (Appendix B)**

Oxford Archaeology East and Network Archaeology jointly published their excavations on the Hardwick to Marsh Gibbon gas pipeline in Volume 54 of Records of Buckinghamshire.

The Solent Thames Regional Research Frameworks were formally published in

8 **Historic Environment Record (HER) report**

The HER performance indicator statistics are shown in the tables below:

Performance Indicator	1st Quarter 2014	2nd Quarter 2014
Historic Environment Records data inputting backlog (targets: reports < 30 by March 2015)	Reports = 40 Collect = 518 Total = 558	Reports = 64 Collect = 518 Total = 582

Volume measures	1st Quarter 2014	2nd Quarter 2014
Number of Higher Level Stewardship applications handled	4	2
Number of reports received by the HER	49	12
Number of Historic Environment Records enquiries handled:		
commercial	29	34
non-commercial	25	29
	4	5

HER enhancement and volunteer projects

Steady progress is being made by the HER volunteers on both the public houses and milestones projects. The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust were successful in their HLF bid and the Research and Recording Project is underway - the draft reports have already been used by the Planning Archaeologist to inform planning recommendations at Parmoor Court and at Green Park.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Archaeological Reports submitted to the Bucks HER

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